

Characterization of Composites Response at High Rates of Deformation

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1. BACKGROUND

The objective of the proposed research is to experimentally study the effect of strain rate on mechanical response (deformation and failure) of IM-7/977-2 carbon fiber/epoxy matrix composites. The experimental data will provide the information needed for the development of a nonlinear, rate dependent deformation and strength model for this material that can subsequently be used in design.

2. EXPERIMENTAL SETUP

Tensile tests at strain rates of approximately 5×10^{-5} , 1, and 400 s^{-1} were conducted. The low strain rate tests (5×10^{-5} and 1 s^{-1}) were done on a hydraulic Instron machine, and the high strain rate tests were done using the tensile split Hopkinson bar apparatus. In tests with the Instron machine, force was measured by the load cell of the machine, and strain was measured with strain gages cemented to the specimen. In each test two strain gages (Measurements Group EA-06-125BZ-350) were cemented on the specimen's surface on opposite sides.

The tensile split Hopkinson bar apparatus, shown schematically in Fig. 1, is made up of two 0.5 in. diameter aluminum bars. The specimen is placed (cemented) between the bars. The specimen is loaded by a tensile wave that is generated in the incident bar by clamping a tensile force in the end section of the bar, and then releasing the clamp. Upon loading, part of the loading wave reflects back to the incident bar, and part propagates on to the transmitter bar. The incident and transmitter bars remain elastic throughout the test. In the standard technique, the history of stress and strain in the specimen is determined from the recorded elastic waves in the bars. In this determination it is assumed that the specimen is under a state of uniform uniaxial tension stress and deformation. In the present research the split Hopkinson bar technique was also modified such that strain could also be measured directly on the specimen. This was done by attaching two strain gages on opposite sides of the specimen, as in the low rate tests. Approximately half of the high strain rate tests were done with strain gages attached to the specimen.

3. SPECIMENS

The specimen is a short dog-bone shape coupon cut from a plate. The coupon is glued to two slotted cylindrical adapters. The specimen's geometry and the adapters are shown in Fig. 2. For use in the split Hopkinson bar the unit is cemented between the input and output bars. For use in the hydraulic testing machine the assembly is pinned to double universal joints which are connected to the grips of the machine. The double universal joint connection reduces the possibility of introducing a bending moment resulting from a possible eccentric load line in the testing machine.

4. RESULTS

Tests were conducted with specimens made of the resin material and with 90° , 10° , 45° , $[\pm 45^\circ]_s$, IM-7/977-2 carbon fiber/epoxy laminates. Each type of specimen was tested at strain rates of approximately 5×10^{-5} , 1, and 400 s^{-1} . In tests with the split Hopkinson bar apparatus, the strain in about half of the tests was also measured with strain gages attached to the specimen.

The tests are summarized in table 1. For each test, the stress, strain, and strain rate (in the split Hopkinson bar tests), all as a function of time, and the stress-strain curve for the test are given in the Appendix (in the order listed in table 1). The stress-strain curves from all the tests for each material tested are given in Figs. 3 – 7. The results show that the material is very sensitive to the strain rate. In all of the specimens tested the initial modulus and the maximum stress increases with strain rate.

4.a. Use of Strain Gages in the Split Hopkinson Bar Tests.

In the standard split Hopkinson bar technique the strain in the specimen is determined from the elastic waves on the bars. The determination is based on the assumption that the state of stress and deformation is uniform in the specimen. This assumption is valid only when the specimen is short such that the time for the waves to

travel through is short. The gage length of the specimens used in the present tests (Fig. 2) is 0.375 in., which is relatively long for this technique. In addition, the rounded ends of the specimen add to the length between the two bars. Under these circumstances it was decided to cement strain gages to half the specimens tested with the split Hopkinson bar apparatus and then to compare their readings with the strain obtained from the elastic stress waves recorded on the bars. The effect of the strain gage itself on the measurements was examined by comparing results from tests with and without strain gages. As described in the next two sections the strain gages that were attached to the specimens affected the response of the resin, but had no effect on the response of the composite specimens.

4.a.1 Tests of the epoxy resin.

Data recorded in a typical test (EXP 99-4) is shown in Fig. 8. The upper three diagrams show the wave profiles from the three strain gage stations *A*, *B*, and *C*, on the split Hopkinson bars (see Fig. 1). The bottom two diagrams show the strain measured by the strain gages on the specimen. Using elastic wave theory, the stress and strain-rate in the specimen are determined from the signals from the three gage stations. The strain is obtained by integrating the strain-rate. These quantities as a function of time are shown in Fig. 9. The figure shows that following the rise time, the strain rate is about 900 1/s, and the strain reaches a value of 0.032 at the end of the test. In addition, this figure shows also the strain measured by the strain gages that are attached to the specimen. The strain experienced by the two strain gages is almost identical, which indicates that the specimen is loaded in nearly pure tension without bending. The strain at the end of the test is about 0.02. The slope of the strain gage strain versus time curve gives the strain rate. Figure 9 shows that this slope is nearly a constant, with a value of 405 1/s, during the test.

The strain rate and subsequently the strain determined from the recorded wave profiles on the split Hopkinson bars are larger than measured directly on the specimen because of the geometry of the specimen. The portion that is between the bars is the middle section (a prism with a cross section of 0.12 in. by 0.18 in. and 0.375 in. long),

and the rounded sections in both ends. The strain rate is determined from the difference in the velocities of the ends of the bars. The difference is due to the deformation in the portion that is between the bars which includes the middle section (the prism) and the rounded ends. In processing the data, however, a gage length has to be defined and substituted in the equation. The curves in Fig. 9 are obtained by taking the gage length as 0.375 in., which is the length of the middle section. Obviously, this gives a larger strain rate since it assumes that all the deformation between the bars including the deformation in the rounded ends occurs only in the middle section.

Stress-strain curves from all of the split Hopkinson bar tests with the resin are shown in Fig. 10. In this figure two curves are shown for each of the tests in which strain gages were placed on the specimen. In one curve the strain determined by the SHB equations was used, and in the other the average strain recorded by the strain gages on the specimen was used. Comparison of the results from split Hopkinson bar tests with and without strain gages on the specimen shows that specimens with the strain gages fracture before specimens without strain gages. Examination of the fractured specimens shows that when a strain gage is glued to the specimen, the specimen fractures at the strain gage ends. It is possible that during the gluing process a layer of the resin underneath the strain gage dissolved introducing a stress concentration at the boundary of the gage. The true resin response (if the strain gage was not on) can be estimated by continuing the stress-strain curve from the tests with the strain gages to the stress level of the tests with specimens without strain gages. This is shown by the dashed line in Fig. 10.

The stress stress-strain curves of all the tests with the split Hopkinson bar on the resin show oscillations in the stress. The period of the oscillations is approximately 20 μ s. The stress profile is obtained from the signal recorded with gage C, which is on the transmitter bar. The oscillations are probably due to waves that travel back and forth in the specimen. Typically, the specimen in the split Hopkinson bar test is very short (0.1 in) such that the waves in the specimen are not visible in the stress signal. In the present tests, however, the length of the resin piece between the ends of the bars is about 1.1875 in. If the time between two peaks corresponds to the time it takes for the wave to travel a round trip in the resin, the wave speed in the resin is:

$$v = \frac{1.1875 \cdot 2}{20 \times 10^{-6}} = 1.19 \times 10^5 \text{ in/s} \quad (3 \text{ mm}/\mu\text{s})$$

The theoretical axial wave speed in a bar of elastic waves is:

Assuming:

$E = 1.61 \times 10^6 \text{ psi}$ (initial slope of the high strain rate stress-strain curves, Fig.)

$\rho = 0.04736 \text{ lb/in}^3$ (1.31 g/cm³)

$$v = \sqrt{\frac{E}{\rho}} = \sqrt{\frac{1.61 \times 10^6 \frac{\text{lb}}{\text{in}^2}}{0.04736 \frac{\text{lb}}{\text{in}^3} \cdot \frac{1}{386.088 \text{ in}} \frac{\text{s}^2}{\text{in}}}} = 1.148 \times 10^5 \text{ in/s} \quad (2.9 \text{ mm}/\mu\text{s})$$

The observed velocity agrees quite well with the theoretical elastic wave speed.

4.a.2 Tests of 90°, 10°, 45°, [±45°]_s, composites.

Stress-strain curves from split hopkinson bar tests with and without strain gages cemented on the specimens are shown for 90°, 10°, 45°, [±45°]_s, laminates in Figs 11 – 14, respectively. The results from all the tests show a small difference between the strain measured by the strain gages and the strain determined by the split Hopkinson bar equations. In all the tests, however, the strain gages had no effect on the maximum stress.

TABLE 1
OSU TESTS FOR NASA
SUMMARY OF TESTS

TEST NO.	SPECIMEN'S MATERIAL	STRAIN RATE (1/s)	COMMENTS
EXP99-1	epoxy resin	980 (SHB equations)	No strain gages on specimen
EXP99-2	epoxy resin	1000 (SHB equations)	No strain gages on specimen
EXP99-3	epoxy resin	900 (SHB equations)	Strain gages on specimen Only one strain gage record
EXP99-4	epoxy resin	405 (strain gages)	Strain gages on specimen
EXP99-5	epoxy resin	356 (strain gages)	Strain gages on specimen
EXP99-6	epoxy resin	365 (strain gages)	Strain gages on specimen
EXP99-7	epoxy resin	5.7×10^{-5}	
EXP99-8	epoxy resin	5.7×10^{-5}	
EXP99-9	epoxy resin	6.3×10^{-5}	
EXP99-10	epoxy resin	1.31	
EXP99-11	epoxy resin	1.31	
EXP99-12	epoxy resin	1.31	
EXP00-1	90° composite	490 (strain gages)	Strain gages on specimen
EXP00-2	90° composite	405 (strain gages)	Strain gages on specimen
EXP00-3	90° composite	395 (strain gages)	Strain gages on specimen
EXP00-4	90° composite	930 max (SHB equations)	No strain gages on specimen
EXP00-5	90° composite	910 max (SHB equations)	No strain gages on specimen
EXP00-6	90° composite	890 max (SHB equations)	No strain gages on specimen
EXP00-7	90° composite	4.44×10^{-5}	
EXP00-8	90° composite	2.14×10^{-5}	
EXP00-9	90° composite	4.52×10^{-5}	
EXP00-10	90° composite	1.06	
EXP00-11	90° composite	1.09	
EXP00-12	90° composite	1.09	
EXP00-13	45° composite	422	Strain gages on specimen
EXP00-14	45° composite	407	Strain gages on specimen
EXP00-15	45° composite	405	Strain gages on specimen
EXP00-16	45° composite	900 max (SHB equations)	No strain gages on specimen
EXP00-17	45° composite	890 max (SHB equations)	No strain gages on specimen
EXP00-18	45° composite	920 max (SHB equations)	No strain gages on specimen

EXP00-19	10° composite	228	Strain gages on specimen
EXP00-20	10° composite	312	Strain gages on specimen
EXP00-21	10° composite	274	Strain gages on specimen
EXP00-22	10° composite	580 (SHB equations)	No strain gages on specimen
EXP00-23	10° composite	480 (SHB equations)	No strain gages on specimen
EXP00-24	45° composite	4.7×10^{-5}	
EXP00-25	45° composite	5.1×10^{-5}	
EXP00-26	45° composite	4.75×10^{-5}	
EXP00-27	10° composite	1.4×10^{-5}	Specimen separated from adapter
EXP00-28	10° composite	1.8×10^{-5}	
EXP00-29	10° composite	1.8×10^{-5}	
EXP00-30	45° composite	1.1	
EXP00-31	45° composite	1.2	
EXP00-32	45° composite	1.0	
EXP00-33	10° composite	0.6	
EXP00-34	10° composite	0.56	
EXP00-35	10° composite	0.56	
EXP00-36	+ - 45° composite	635	Strain gages on specimen
EXP00-37	+ - 45° composite	517	Strain gages on specimen
EXP00-38	+ - 45° composite	604	Strain gages on specimen
EXP00-39	+ - 45° composite	9×10^{-5}	Specimen separated from adapter
EXP00-40	+ - 45° composite	9.3×10^{-5}	
EXP00-41	+ - 45° composite	2	
EXP00-42	+ - 45° composite	2.1	

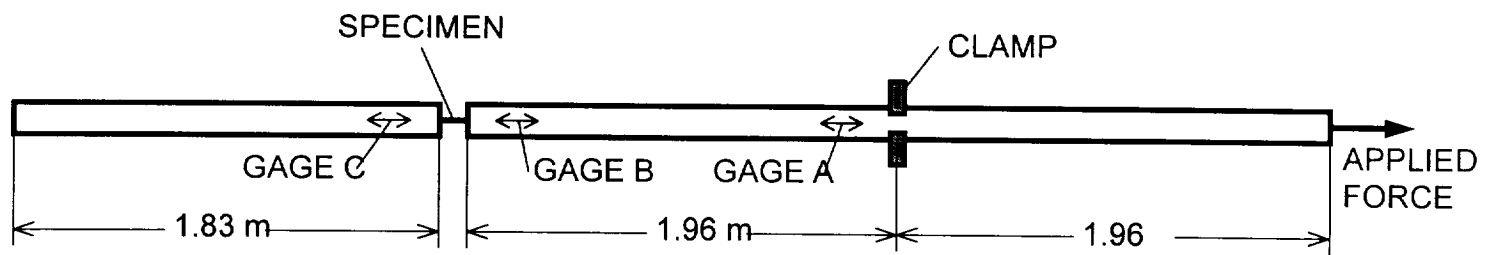
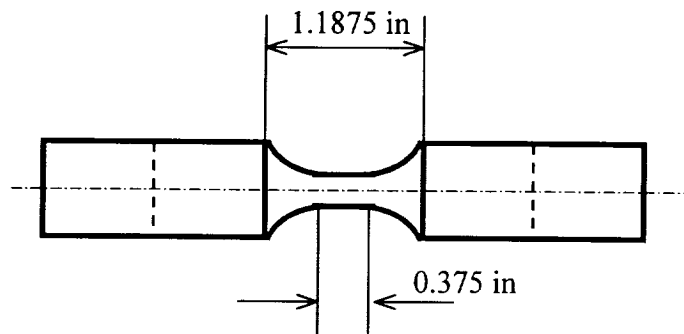


Fig. 1: Schematic of the tensile split Hopkinson bar apparatus.



DOG-BONE COUPON



SLOTTED CYLINDRICAL
HOLDERS (ADAPTERS)

Fig. 2 Specimen and adapters.

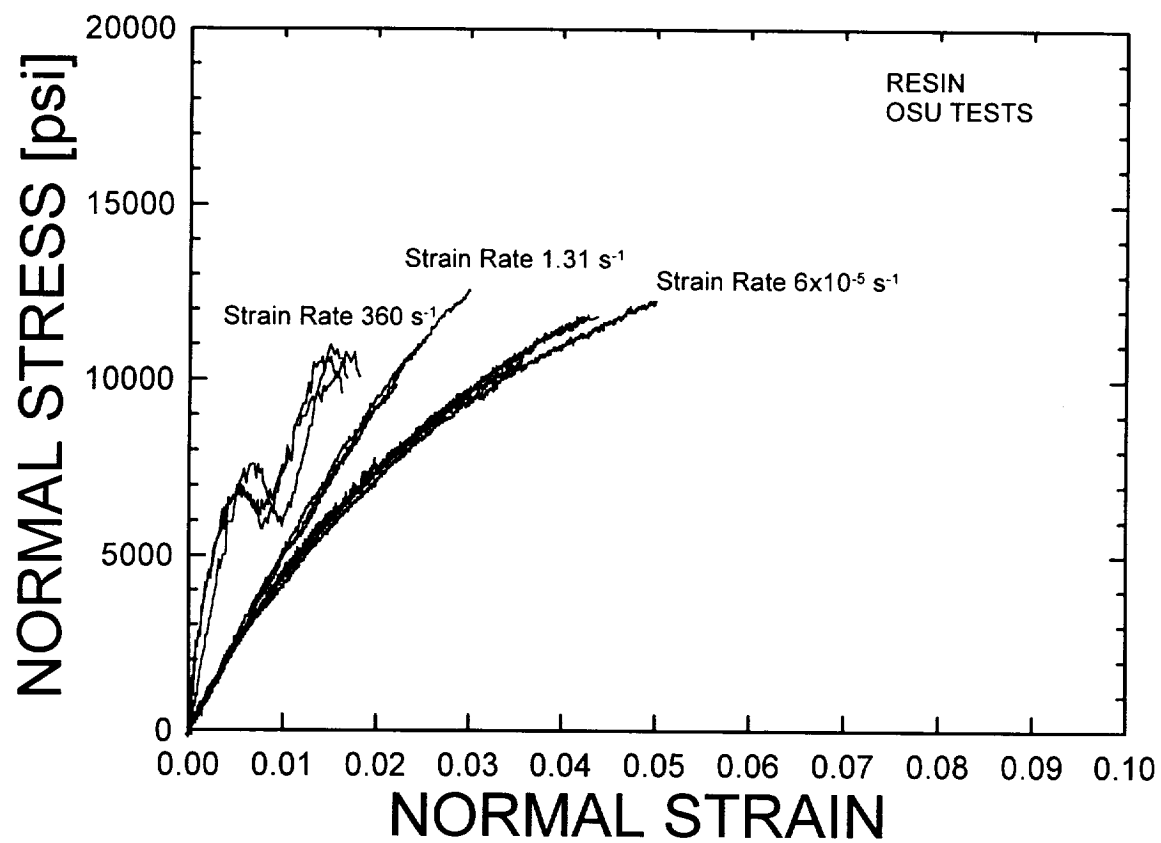


Fig. 3 Stress strain curves for the resin at different strain rates.

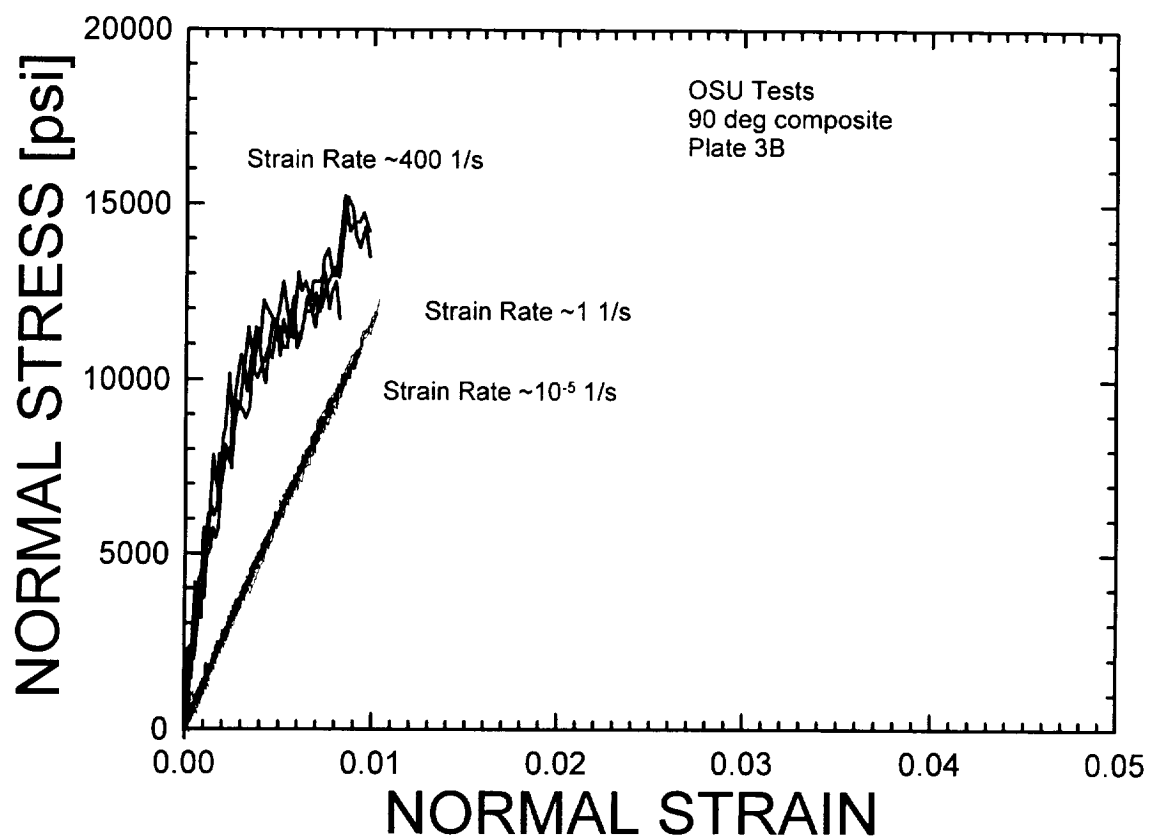


Fig. 4 Stress strain curves for the 90° composite at different strain rates.

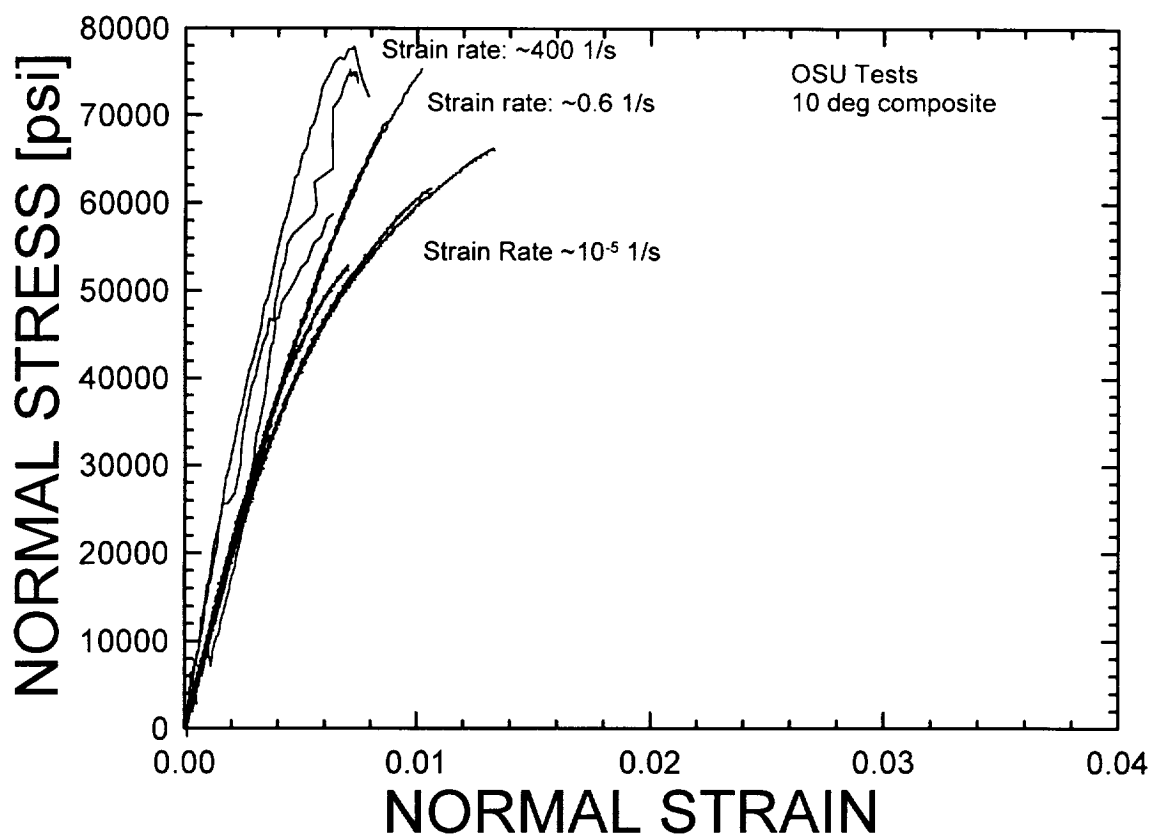


Fig. 5 Stress strain curves for the 10⁰ composite at different strain rates.

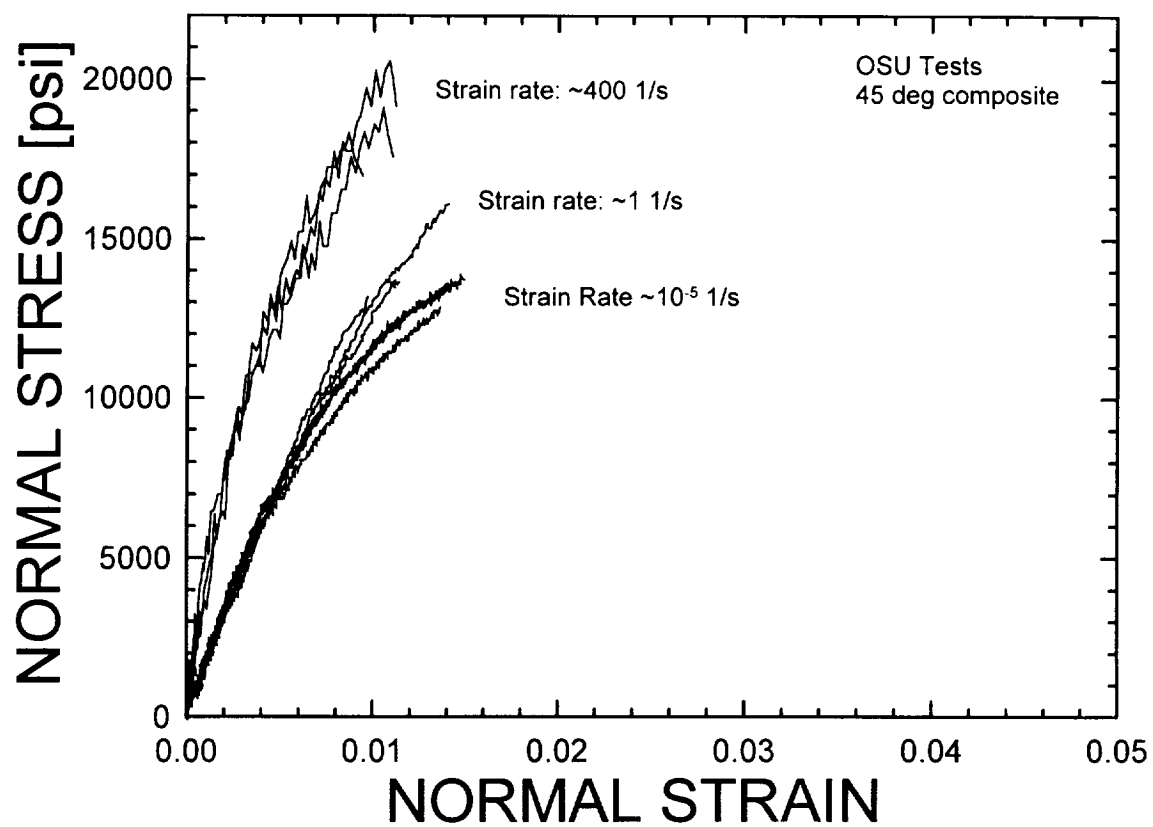


Fig. 6 Stress strain curves for the 45° composite at different strain rates.

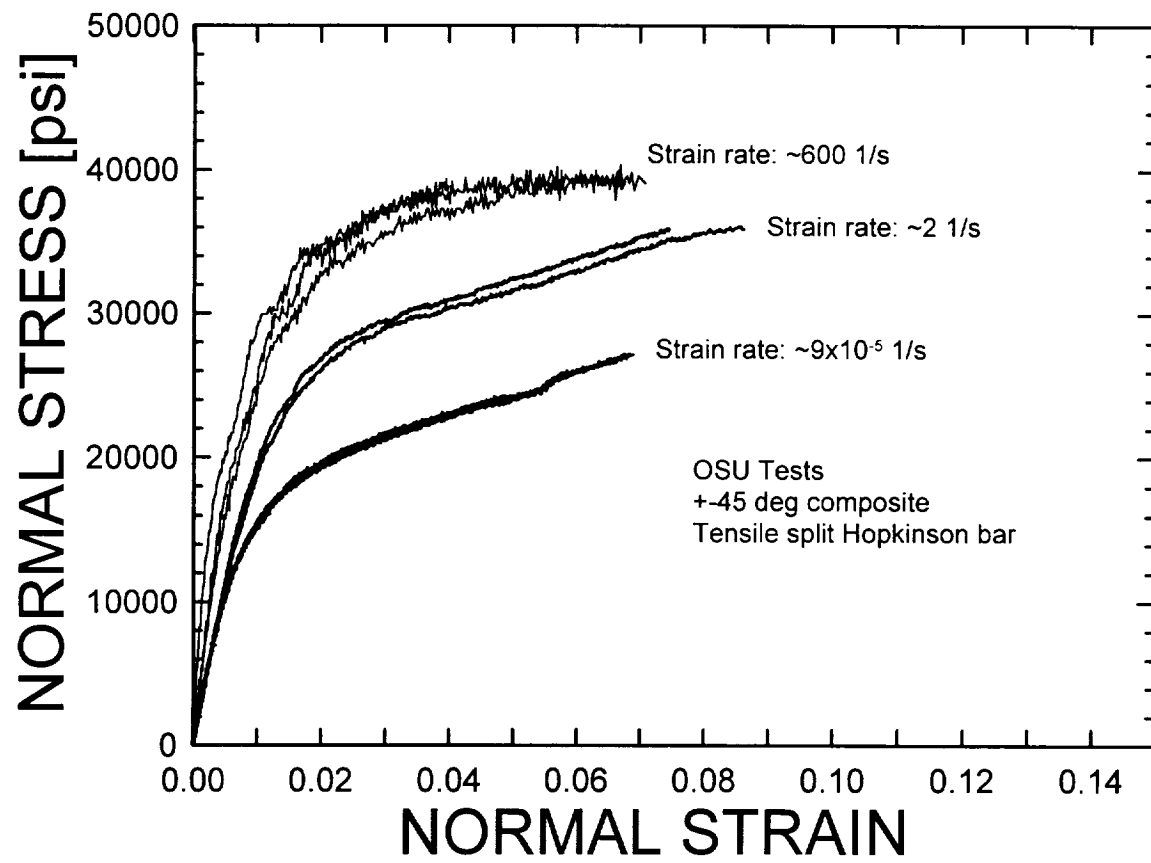


Fig. 7 Stress strain curves for the $[\pm 45^\circ]_S$ composite at different strain rates.

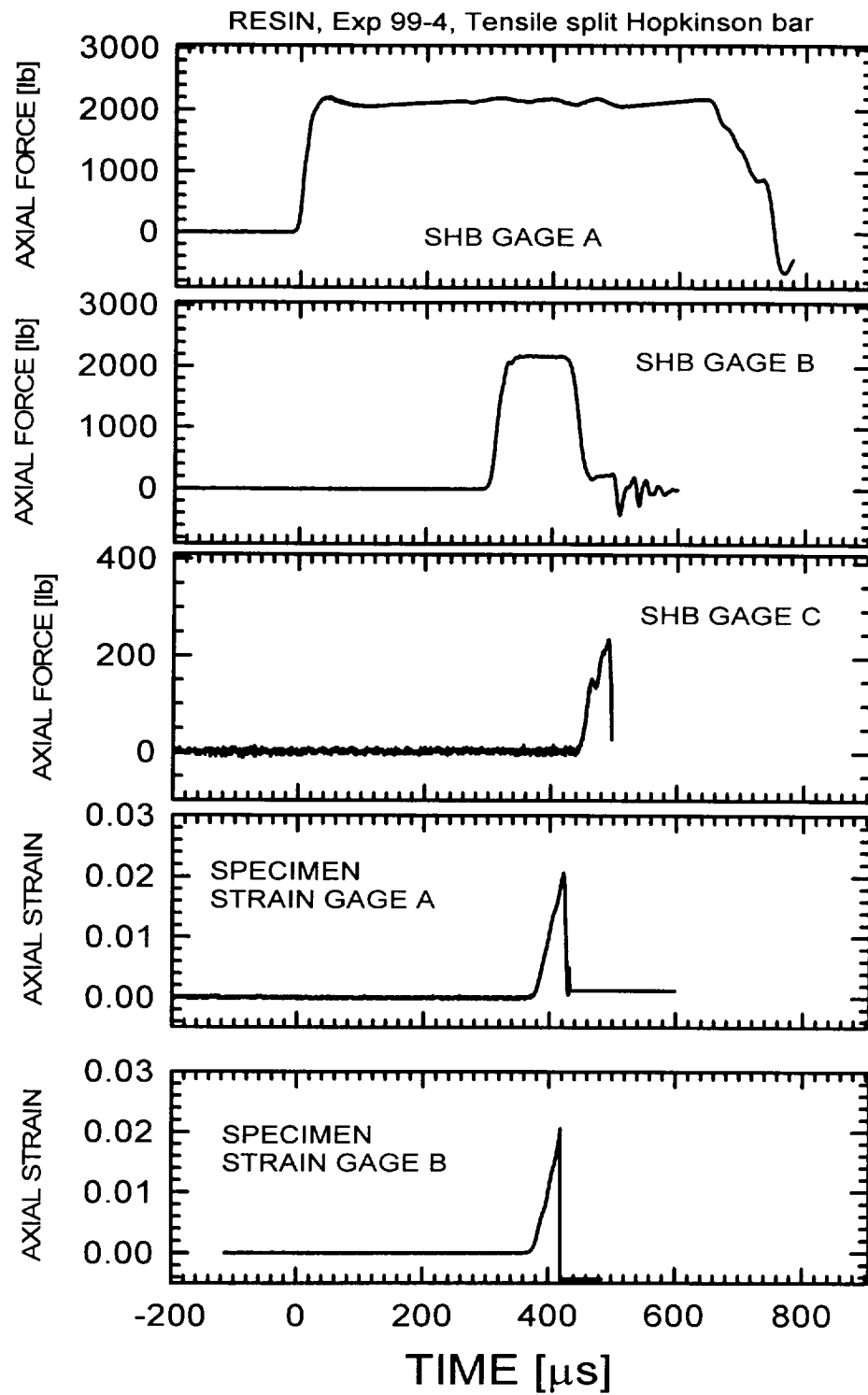


Fig. 8 Raw data recorded in test 99-4.

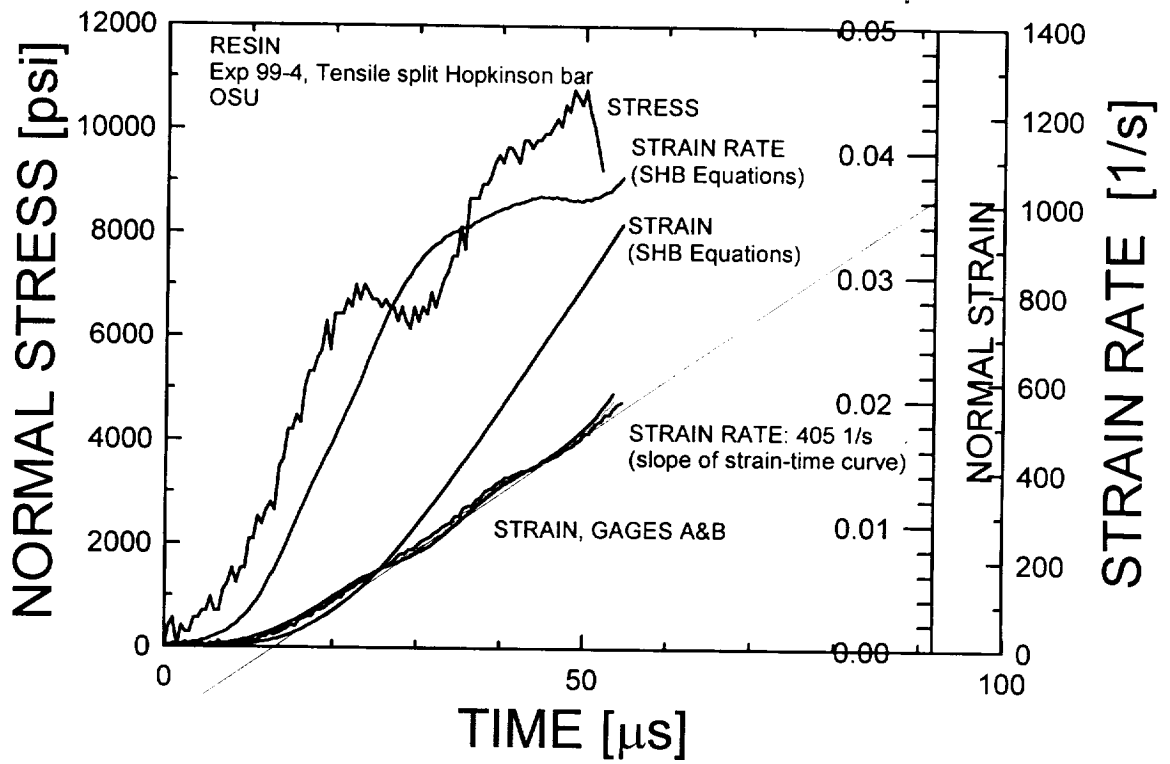


Fig. 9 Stress, strain rate, and strain vs. time in test 99-4.

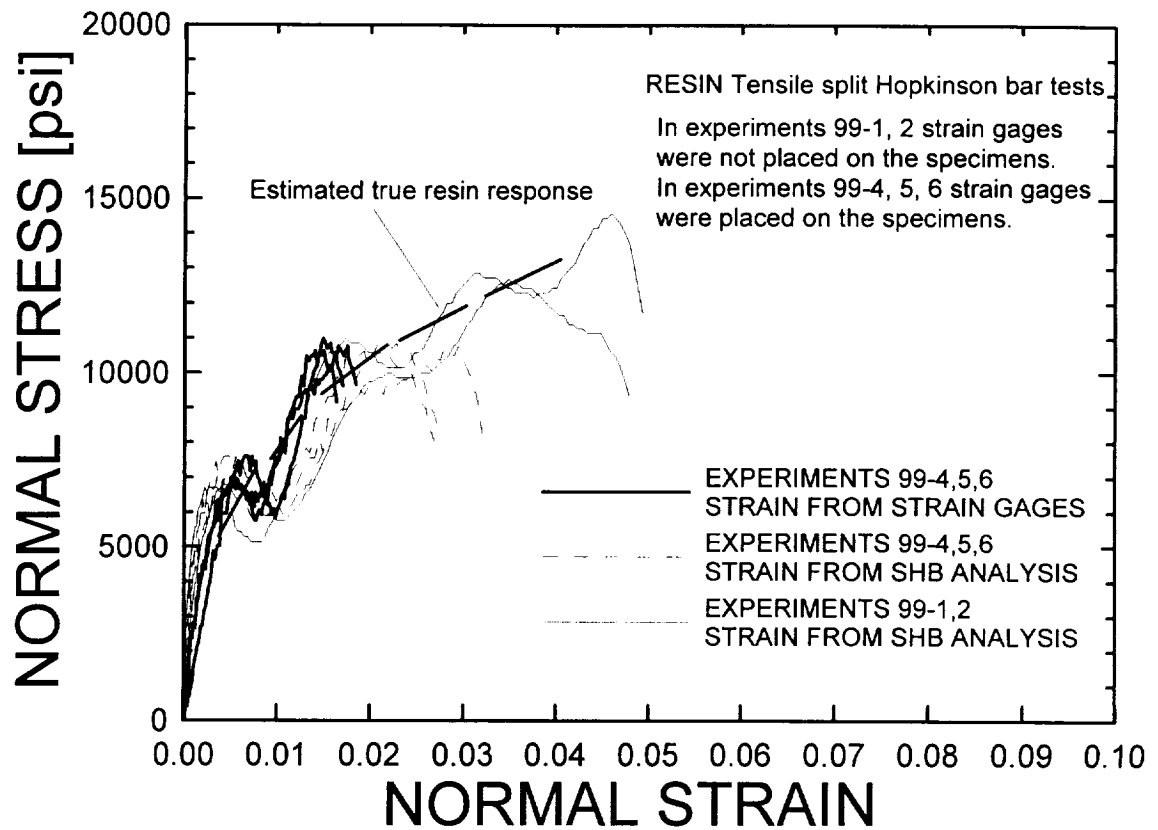


Fig. 10 Resin stress-strain curves from all split Hopkinson bar tests.

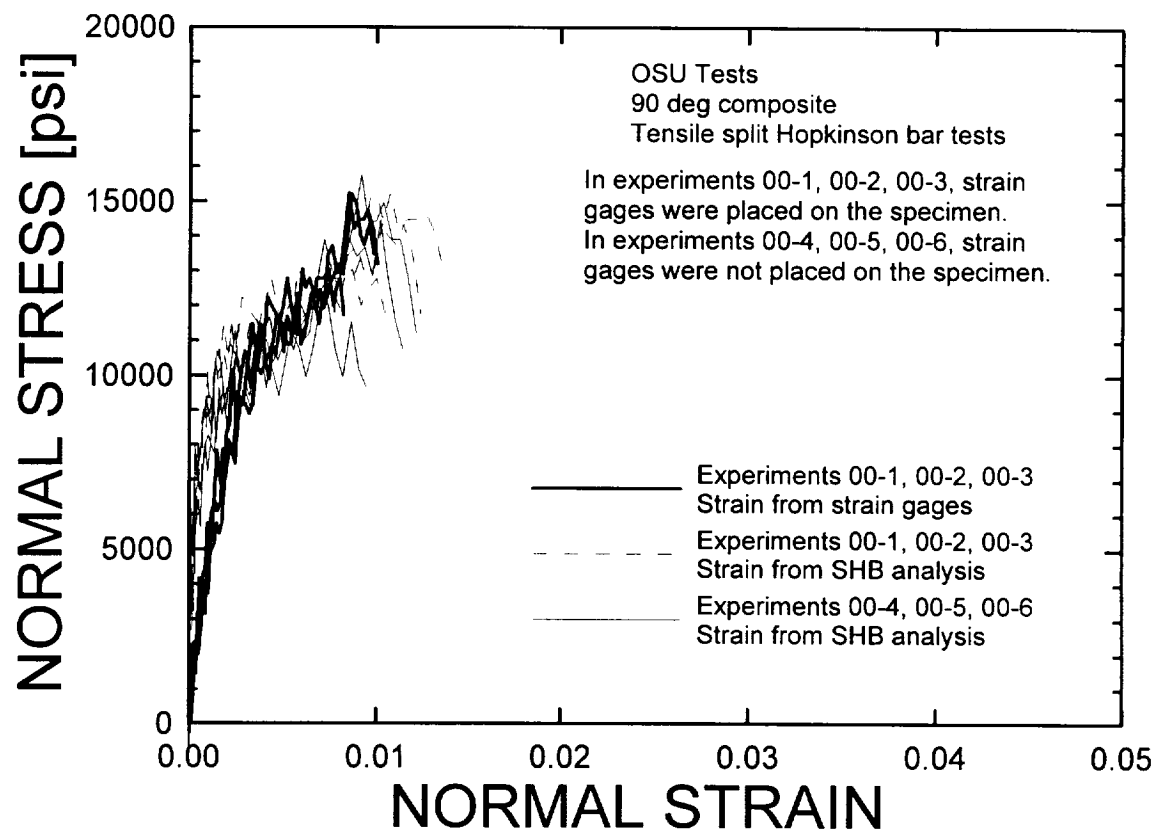


Fig. 11 Stress-strain curves for 90° laminates from all split Hopkinson bar tests.

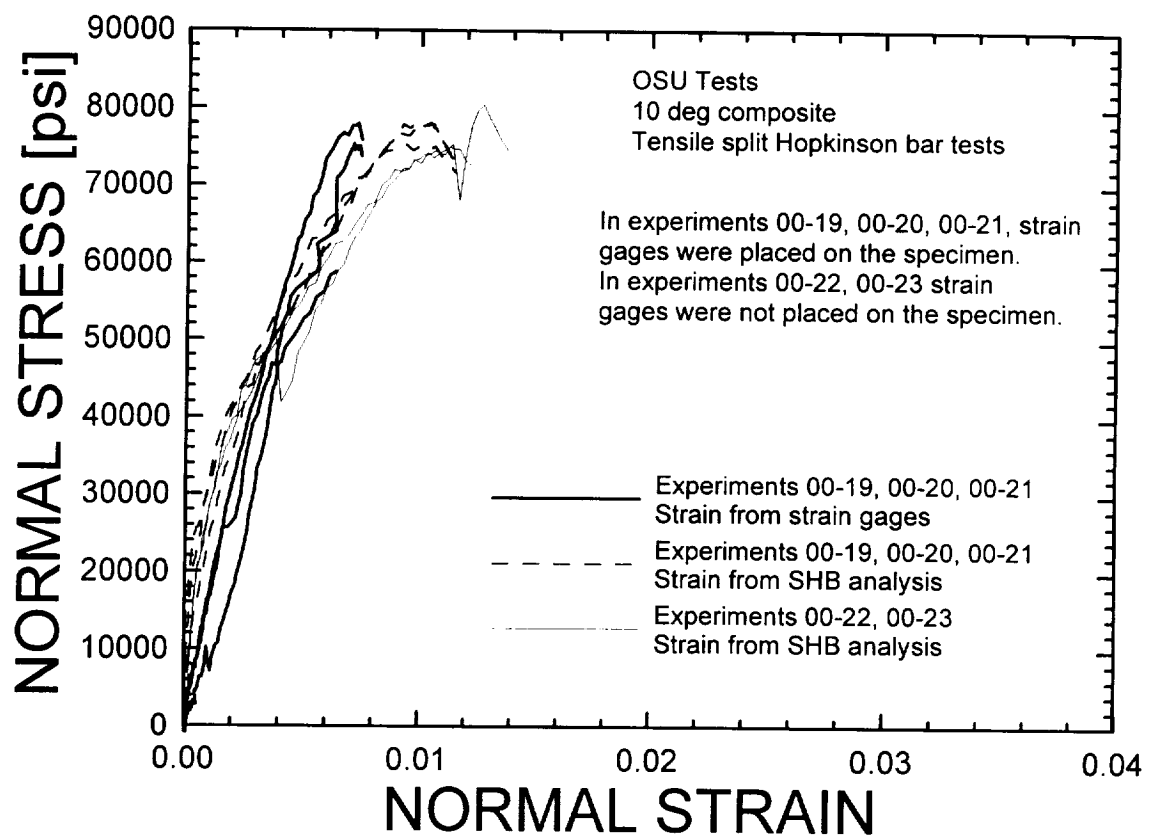


Fig. 12 Stress-strain curves for 10^0 laminates from all split Hopkinson bar tests.

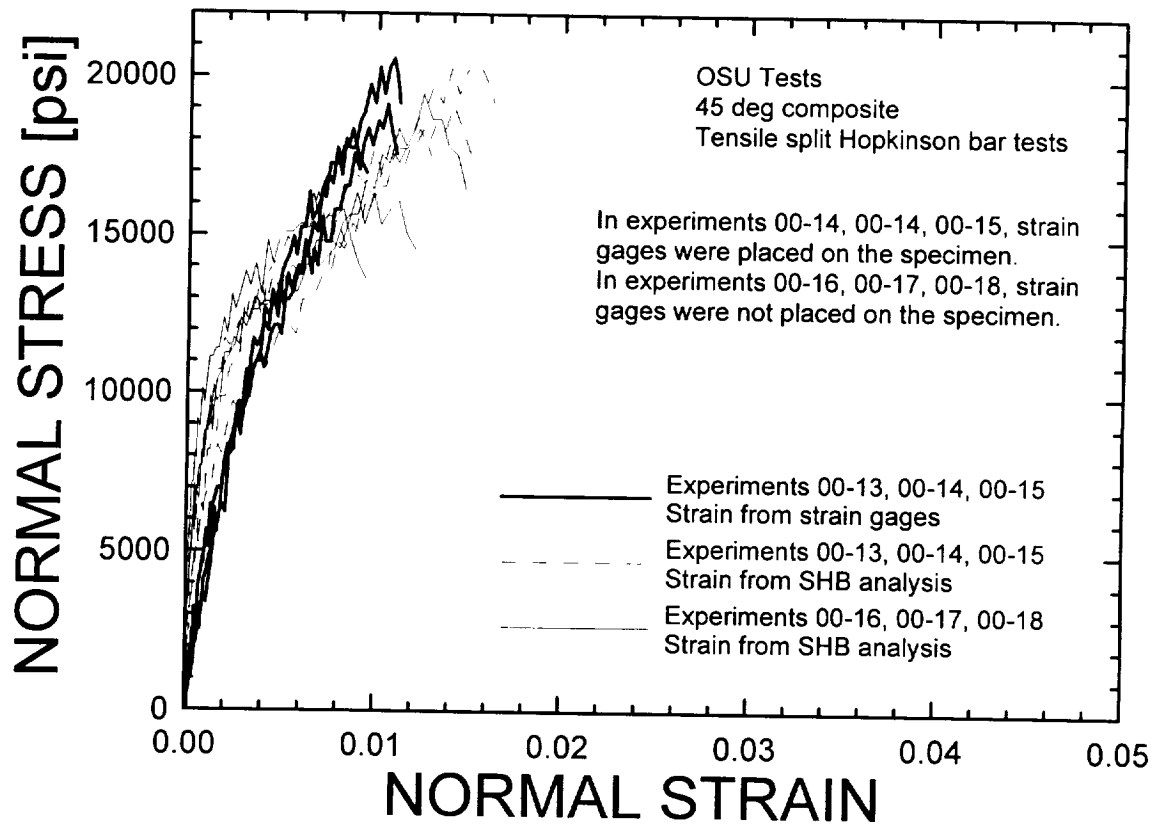


Fig. 13 Stress-strain curves for 45° laminates from all split Hopkinson bar tests.

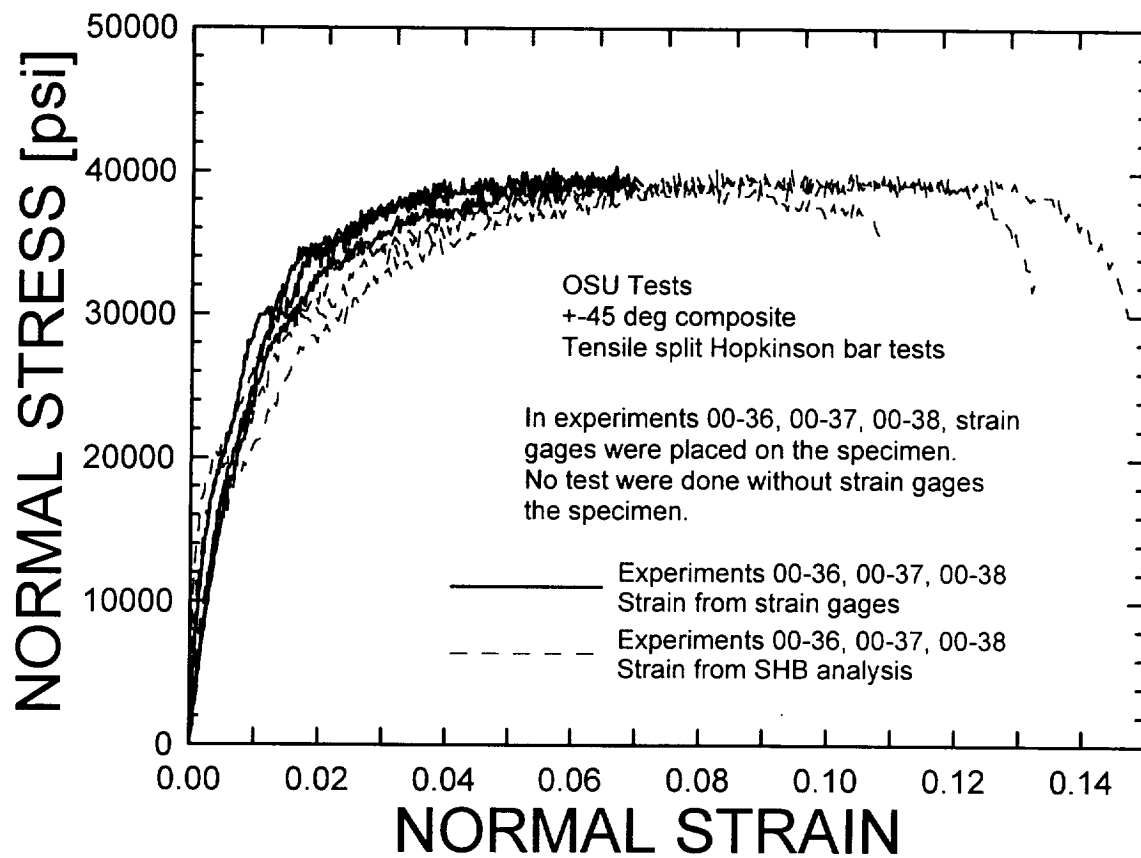


Fig. 14 Stress-strain curves for $[\pm 45^\circ]_s$ laminates from all split Hopkinson bar tests.

APPENDIX

For each test two plots are presented. In one the stress, strain (measured by the strain gages when gages were attached to the specimen, and/or determined by the SHB analysis), and strain rate (in the split Hopkinson bar tests), all as a function of time. The other plot contains the stress-strain curve for the test.

The plots are in the order listed in Table 1.

